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DE RUEHNE #1814 0751243
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1349
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0931
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0029
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 4115
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4136
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 7032
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2476
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4785
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 8876
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 7332
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0822
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2904
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 2452
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 2301
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 1532
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 9685
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1914
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI
RHMFIISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 001814

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DEPT FOR SA, IO, G (J FERRAO) AND P (A MANUEL AND T
BRADLEY), NSC FOR ABRAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2016

TAGS: PREL KDEM PGOV IN

SUBJECT: GOI MOVING DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE FORWARD

REF: A. NEW DELHI 1738

1B. NAIR-FERRAO 3/14 TELCON
1C. NEW DELHI 759

Classified By: Charge Bob Blake for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

11. (C) The Charge, accompanied by PolCouns and Poloff, called on Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma on March 16 to further our discussion on democracy initiatives. Charge explained USG reservations regarding the initial GOI proposal to establish a New Delhi office of the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) (Ref C), emphasizing that we would strongly support an institution with an Indian, rather than a UN, imprimatur, which could work in tandem with the UNDEF. In response, Sharma explained that GOI thinking had advanced beyond the message delivered to PolCouns on March 13 (Ref A), and that Sharma had sent a letter to the trustees of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) to solicit the Foundation's views on setting up a democracy institute under its auspices.

Sharma had briefed Sonia Gandhi, the UPA Chairperson and head of the RGF, on the ideas, and Mrs. Gandhi is fully on board, he assured us.

12. (C) New Delhi is aware of the US desire to establish an Indian institution, Sharma said. However, the GOI assesses that an alignment with UNDEF principles and practices will help ensure that the affiliate NGOs would meet India's standards for credibility in working through the proposed democracy institute, he explained. PolCouns suggested that a concept paper from the GOI on how the institute would function would crystallize the idea and help us both to move it forward in time to have progress to announce at the time

of the next meeting of the UNDEF Advisory Board in June 2006.

Sharma took note of this target, underlined India's commitment to engage on global democracy issues, and lamented that the press of other US-India business had delayed a further response to the ideas paper he had received from U/S Burns on February 24.

13. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

BLAKE